

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 COME-00 OES-09 HEW-04

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 /042 W

-----069997 220010Z /12

R 182215Z AUG 78

FM AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3064

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MARTINIQUE 0616

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, PGOV, FW

SUBJ: WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE...

SUMMARY: AN AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN, DAVID A. CHRISTMAN III, PRESIDENT AND OWNER OF THE TRANS GLOBAL STEAMSHIP COMPANY, NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY, HAS CONTACTED FRENCH OFFICIALS IN GUADELOUPE SEEKING A CONTRACT TO PURCHASE POTABLE WATER FROM GUADELOUPE FOR TRANSPORT TO THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS. FOLLOWING SEVERAL MONTHS OF RESEARCH AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH USVI OFFICIALS AND TWO MEETINGS WITH FRENCH OFFICIALS IN GUADELOUPE, CHRISTMAN APPEARS TO BE ON THE VERGE OF SIGNING A CONTRACT BY WHICH HE WOULD SUPPLY THE USVI WITH TWO MILLION GALLONS OF TREATED GUADELOUPE WATER A DAY FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS -- A \$30 MILLION DEAL. END SUMMARY.

1. DAVID A. CHRISTMAN III, PRESIDENT AND OWNER OF THE TRANS GLOBAL STEAMSHIP COMPANY, NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY, MET WITH FRENCH OFFICIALS IN GUADELOUPE ON AUGUST 7 AND 18 TO SEEK RIGHTS TO SURPLUS TREATED GUADELOUPE WATER WHICH HE WOULD THEN SUPPLY TO THE PARCHED USVI. ACCORDING TO THE TERMS OF THE WATER PURCHASE PROPOSAL, CHRISTMAN WOULD LOAD SEVEN MILLION GALLONS OF TREATED WATER TWICE A WEEK INTO HIS 629 FOOT TANKER AT POINTE-A-PITRE ONCE THE HARBOR IS DREDGED TO A DEPTH OF 33 FEET. AT ITS PRESENT DEPTH
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OF 29 FEET, CHRISTMAN'S TANKER CAN TAKE ON ONLY SLIGHTLY MORE THAN SIX MILLION GALLONS. DELIVERY OF THE WATER WOULD BEGIN IN NINETY DAYS.

2. CHRISTMAN HAS BEEN WORKING ON THE USVI WATER SUPPLY AND TRANSPORT PROJECT FOR APPROXIMATELY SIX MONTHS UAS A PRIVATE BUSINESSMAN AND HAS BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT DURING THAT

TIME WITH CLAUDE A. MOLLOY, COMMISSIONER OF PROPERTY AND PROCUREMENT FOR THE USVI GOVERNMENT (GOUSVI). THE USVI, AND ESPECIALLY ST. THOMAS, HAVE EXPERIENCED A CRITICAL WATER SHORTAGE AT LEAST SINCE FEB 14, 1975, WHEN FORMER GOVERNOR CYRIL E. KING DECLARED A STATE OF EMERGENCY. THE WATER SHORTAGE IS DUE LARGELY TO THE LARGE AMOUNTS OF WATER USED BY TOURISTS AND TO THE FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION RULING THAT CISTERNES, WHICH FORMERLY PROVIDED AS MUCH AS ONE-THIRD OF USVI NEEDS, WERE UNSAFE. THE USVI HAVE BEEN PURCHASING WATER FROM PUERTO RICO TRANSPORTED BY THE DANISH-OWNED WEST INDIAN STEAMSHIP CO., BUT A REPORTED RECENT DECISION THAT PUERTO RICO WILL NO LONGER EXPORT NATURAL RESOURCES WILL SOON DRY UP THAT SOURCE AND THE GOUSVI HAD CONSEQUENTLY ASKED FOR BIDS FROM POTENTIAL SUPPLIERS.

3. CHRISTMAN HAD ALSO CONSIDERED DOMINICA AS A SOURCE OF WATER AND IN FACT FLEW TO DOMINICA ON AUG 12 WITH MOLLOY AND USVI ATTORNEY ALBERT SHEEHAN. THEY MET WITH PREMIER PATRICK JOHN, MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, LANDS AND FISHERIES OLIVER SEREPHIN AND MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS, WORKS AND HYDRAULICS M.A. DOUGLAS AND TOURED THE ISLAND. CHRISTMAN'S WASHINGTON DC BASED ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS HAD PREVIOUSLY INFORMED HIM THAT DOMINICA HAD NEITHER THE TREATMENT, STORAGE NOR LOADING FACILITIES THAT WOULD PERMIT DELIVERY OF THE WATER IN THE QUANTITY AND LOADING

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TIME REQUIRED AND THAT THE CONSTRUCTION OF SUCH FACILITIES PROVIDING A WILLING INVESTOR COULD BE FOUND, COULD NOT BE COMPLETED BEFORE LATE 1979. GIVEN THE SIZEABLE INVESTMENT AND TIME REQUIRED TO BUILD THE REQUIRED FACILITIES AND THE ADDED FACTOR OF POLITICAL INSTABILITY, CHRISTMAN ELIMINATED DOMINICA AS A POSSIBILITY.

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INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 COME-00 OES-09 HEW-04

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MARTINIQUE 0616

4. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO CHRISTMAN, MOLLOY HAD APPARENTLY DISCUSSED A DEAL WITH SEREPHIN AND JOHN IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE USVI WOULD INVEST TWO MILLION DOLLARS IN STORAGE AND TREATMENT FACILITIES IN DOMINICA. MOLLOY HAD NOT DISCUSSED THIS POSSIBILITY WITH CHRISTMAN, BUT ONE OF THE DOMINICAN OFFICIALS WHO ASSUMED THAT CHRISTMAN WAS INFORMED REFERRED TO IT IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE LATTER AND IMPLIED THAT DOMINICA WOULD USE THE FACILITIES TO EXPORT WATER TO SAUDI ARABIA.

DOM-VITA, A NEW YORK BASED CORPORATION WHOSE PRESIDENT, C.A. BUTLER, IS CHAIRMAN OF THE DOMINICAN BOARD OF TOURISM, APPARENTLY HAS RIGHTS TO ALL WATER EXPORTED FROM DOMINICA TO NON-CARIBBEAN DESTINATIONS.

5. CHRISTMAN MET WITH USVI GOV JUAN LUIS AND MOLLOY ON AUG 15 AND PRESENTED HIS CASE FOR SELECTING GUADELOUPE OVER DOMINICA FOR THE SOURCE OF WATER SUPPLY. ACCORDING TO CHRISTMAN, GOV LUIS AND MOLLOY BOTH AGREED THAT DOMINICA COULD NOT SUPPLY THE QUANTITY OF WATER NEEDED WITHOUT AN UNTENABLE DELAY AND GAVE CHRISTMAN THE GO-AHEAD TO MAKE THE DEAL WITH GUADELOUPE. CHRISTMAN PRESENTED A WATER PURCHASE AGREEMENT TO FRENCH OFFICIALS IN GUADELOUPE ON AUGUST 18, WHICH IS TO SERVE AS A CONTRACT UNTIL A FORMAL ONE IS SIGNED IN
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SEPTEMBER.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Draft Date: 18 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Secure: OPEN
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Subject: WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE... SUMMARY: AN AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN, DAVID A. CHRISTMAN III, PRESIDENT AND OWNER OF THE TRANS GLOBAL STEAMSHIP
TAGS: ETRD, PGOV, SOCI, TBIO, FW, US
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Type: TE
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Review Markings:
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